

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KABUL 01005 100646Z

14-C

ACTION PER-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6138

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: APER, AF

SUBJ: ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION STAFFING

FOR NEA/EX

REF: A) STATE 10505 B) KABUL 0746

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY KABUL ACCEPTS WITH REGRET LOSS OF ONE AMERICAN POSITION IN THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL (E/C) SECTION. RATHER THAN SHARPLY CURTAIL THE POST EXPORT PROMOTION/COMMERCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WE WILL RESHUFFLE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TWO REMAINING OFFICERS, WITH A GREATER SHARE OF ROUTINE COMMERCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES SHOULDERED BY THE LOCAL STAFF. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WE REQUEST AUTHORIZATION FOR A SECOND LOCAL POSITION FOR THE E/C SECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE AVAILABILITY OF A THIRD OFFICER IN THE E/C SECTION HAS ENABLED THE POST TO DEVOTE APPROXIMATELY 1-1/3 MAN-YEARS ANNUALLY TO EXPORT PROMOTION AND ASSISTANCE TO U.S. BUSINESSMEN. THE LOSS OF THIS POSITION WILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN SOME REDUCTION IN THESE ACTIVITIES. HOWEVER, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT AFGHANISTAN HAS SIGNIFICANT POTENTIAL FOR THE SALE OF U.S. SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT, BASED ON THE AVAILABILITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, PRIMARILY FROM OPEC COUNTRIES AND ON THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING OF THE GOA. IN FACT IT IS IN THE SALES OF U.S. GOODS AND SERVICES WHERE ARE LIKELY TO SUFFER THE MOST FROM LOSS OF THIS POSITION. WE ARE THEREFORE UNWILLING TO SHARPLY CURTAIL OUR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES. SINCE AN AMERICAN OFFICER IS ESSENTIAL FOR MOST OF THE FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT INVOLVED IN EXPORT PROMOTION, WE WOULD PREFER THAT MUCH UNCLASSIFIED

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OF THE CURRENT E/C WORKLOAD INVOLVING ROUTINE INFORMATION

GATHERING AND REPORTING BE ASSUMED BY A LOCAL EMPLOYEE.

3. AT PRESENT, THE SECTION HAS ONE EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEE, THE COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST, WHO SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME OUT OF THE OFFICE ON COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES AND HAS LITTLE TIME FOR DRAFTING. ONE ADDITIONAL LOCAL POSITION COULD ALLOW THE TWO LOCALS TO ASSUME THE MAJOR BURDEN OF ROUTINE REPORTING, WHILE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE AMERICAN OFFICERS' ACTIVITIES.

4. THE BASIC DUTIES OF A NEW LOCAL EMPLOYEE, DEPUTY COMMERCIAL SPECIALIST, WOULD INCLUDE: COMPLETE PREPARATION OF WORLD TRADERS DATA REPORTS AND AGENT-DISTRIBUTOR SERVICES REPORTS; ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF LOCAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES; RESPONSIBILITY FOR A LARGE PART OF THE CERP REQUIREMENTS; MAKING APPOINTMENTS FOR, AND PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO VISITING U.S. BUSINESSMEN; TRANSLATION OF COMMERCIAL LAWS AND DOCUMENTS; MARKET RESEARCH; AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY. THESE DUTIES WOULD BE SHARED WITH THE EXISTING LOCAL EMPLOYEE, WHO WILL REMAIN THE POST'S PRIMARY RESOURCE PERSON ON MARKET EVALUATION; THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN CONTACTS ON COMMERCIAL MATTERS; EVALUATION OF POSSIBLE PROJECTS, PROPOSALS, AND PEOPLE IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR; AND ROUTINE ECONOMIC RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND REPORTING. (CURRENTLY, MOST OF THE ABOVE RESPONSIBILITIES ARE CARRIED BY THE THIRD AMERICAN OFFICER, WITH OUR SINGLE LOCAL PROVIDING THE RAW INFORMATION NECESSARY.)

5. DUE TO THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE ARCANE AFGHAN MARKET AND OPERATING PROCEDURES, AND WIDESPREAD AFGHAN IGNORANCE OF U.S. FIRMS AND THEIR REQUIREMENTS, EXPORT PROMOTION IS THE MOST TIME CONSUMING OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THIS SECTION. IF THE MOST ROUTINE WORK CAN BE ASSUMED BY AN ENHANCED LOCAL STAFF, REQUIRING ONLY OCCASIONAL SUPERVISION, THERE WILL STILL BE TIME FOR THE TWO AMERICAN OFFICERS TO PROVIDE AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF SERVICE TO U.S. FIRMS, IN ADDITION TO THE SECTION'S OTHER PRIMARY TASKS OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND REPORTING, AND LIASON AND COORDINATION WITH THE LARGE USAID MISSION HERE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED. DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ADDITION OF ONE NEW LOCAL POSITION.

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